

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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O 131538Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7141

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 10186

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG US IS

SUBJECT: UNEF RENEWAL

REF STATE 243022

SUMMARY. I RAISED WITH FAHMY LAST NIGHT MATTER OF UNEF RENEWAL AND ASKED THAT HE RECONSIDER HIS TURNDOWN OF OUR PROPOSEDH SCENARIO. HE ADAMANTLY REFUSED TO DO SO, TROTting OUT ALL OF THE FAMILIAR ARGUMENTS: EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY IS AT STAKE; USG AT SALZBURG

AND ALEXANDRIA HAD SOUGHT AND RECEIVED SADAT'S AGREEMENT TO WORK FOR UNEF RENEWAL INSIDE OR OUTSIDE UNSC, THEREBY RECOGNIZING GOE ALONE HAS RIGHT TO MAKE ACCEPTABLE REQUEST FOR UNEF RENEWAL; UNSC HAD ALREADY IGNORED ISRAELI LETTER OF LAST JULY RE SIX-MONTH RENEWAL ETC. THIS IS NOT A PROCEDURAL MATTER, BUT ONE OF HIGH POLITICAL SENSITIVITY. ISRAEL SHOULD NEITHER SEND LETTER TO SYG ASKING FOR UNEF RENEWAL NOR HAVE ITS ACQUIESCENCE STATED IN SYG REPORT. DURING DEBATE, HOWEVER, ISRAEL MIGHT WELCOME UNEF RENEWAL FOR A YEAR. FAHMY'S LETTER IS READY TO SEND AS SOON AS SUCH ASSURANCE RECEIVED. IF NO SUCH ASSURANCE RECEIVED, MATTERS WILL HAVE TO TAKE THEIR OWN COURSE. IF ISRAEL UNILATERALLY REQUESTS ONE YEAR UNEF RENEWAL, EGYPT WILL ALLOW DEBATE TO PROCEED WITHOUT INITIALLY SAYING ANYTHING. SOVIETS AND OTHERS MAY BE EXPECTED DEMAND THREE OR SIX MONTH EXTENSION. IN THAT EVENT, GOE WILL DEFER ITS INTERVENTION TO ASK

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FOR ONE YEAR RENEWAL UNTIL RIGHT MOMENT WHEN IT IS CLEAR TO ALL

THAT GOE, NOT ISRAEL, DETERMINES HOW LONG UNEF SHOULD
STAY. ALTHOUGH I AGAIN ASKED FAHMY RECONSIDER, I
DOUBT THAT HE WILL SHOW MUCH FLEXIBILITY. THOUGHT OCCURS TO ME THAT
HG, IF HE AGREES WITH OUR VIEWS, MIGHT BE ASKED TO TAKE
INITIATIVE WITH FAHMY TO REQUEST A MORE REASONABLE SCENARIO.
END SUMMARY.

1. ABOUT HALF OF MH TWO-HOUR LONG SESSION WITH FAHMY
L
T NIGHT WAS TAKEN UP WITH THE SUBJECT OF UNEF RENEWAL.
YOU SHOULD KNOW AT THE OUTSET THT HE WOULD NOT BUDGE.

2. I BEGAN BY RECALLING THAT, IN THE SPIRIT OF CANDID
CONSULTATION THAT CHACTERIZES OUR RELATIONS, WE HAD
FRANKLY STATED TO HIM OUR RESERVATIONS ABOUT
HIS PROPOSED APPROACH TO UNEF RENEWAL. IN DOING SO,
WE WERE MINDFUL OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE PRESENT SITUATION AND HAD
NO DESIRE TO AGGRAVATE EXISTING PROBLEMS CONFRONTING
GOE IN HIS RELATIONS WITH REJECTIONIST ARAB STATES. HOWEVER,
WE TOO HAVE SOME SENSITIVE PROBLEMS THAT MUST BE FACED
AND ASK OUR EGYPTIAN FRIENDS TO WORK WITH US TO ACHIEVE MUTUALLY
SATISFACTORY SOLUTION. WE FULLY APPRECIATE THE CONCERN THAT
PRINCIPLE OF EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER SINAI NOT BE INFRINGED,
BUT BOTH OF US MUST ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT ISRAEL IS IN
OCCUPATION
OF PART OF SINAI AND EGYPT AND ISRAEL HAVE JUST SIGNED
DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT CALLING FOR ANNUAL RENEWAL OF UNEF.
LATTER HAS THUS BECOME INTEGRAL PART OF SINAI AGREEMENT AND
ISRAEL IS NOT LIKELY TO GIVE UP ITS VOICE IN OBTAINING UNEF
RENEWAL.

3. WE SINCERELY BELIEVE THAT ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL WHICH CHARGE
MAESTRONE PRESENTED (STATE 240688) SHOULD MEET FAHMY'S
CONCERNS ON THIS SCORE. OTHERWISE WE WOULD NOT HAVE PRESENTED IT.
WE HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED IN HIS REACTION, WHICH HARDLY SEEMED
REASONABLE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES. PARTICULARLY DISTURBING HAD BEEN
HIS THREAT THAT IF AN EGYPTIAN LETTER IS FOLLOWED BY AN ISRAELI
LETTER, HE WOULD WITHDRAW EGYPTIAN CONSENT. I RECALLED SADAT
HAD GAINED GREATER WORLDWIDE STATURE BECAUSE OF HIS STATESMANSHIP
IN SIGNING RECENT DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. WITH THIS ACHIEVEMENT,
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WE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE GOE WOULD WANT TO ASSUME THE ONUS OF
SEEMING TO RENEGE ON A SOLEMN AGREEMENT, ESPECIALLY ON WHAT
IS ESSENTIALLY A PROCEDURAL ISSUE. SHOULD SUCH A THREAT BE CARRIED OU
T,
WOULD BE NO ONE'S INTEREST. WE HOPED, THEREFORE, THAT AFTER
FURTHER REFLECTION, FAHMY WOULD RECONSIDER AND AGREE TO
PROCEED ALONG THE LINES OF THE SCENARIO WE PROPOSED. I STRESSED
THAT THIS FULLY PROTECTS GOE SOVEREIGNTY CONCERNS.

4. FAHMY SAID HE HAD EXPECTED US TO ASK FOR RECONSIDERATION. WHILE APPRECIATING CANDOR WITH WHICH WE WERE DISCUSSING MATTER WITH HIM, HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO DO SO. HE REITERATED POINTS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY MADE TO ME AND TO DCM. EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE SINAI IS AT STAKE. THE ISRAELIS MAY BE OCCUPYING PART OF SINAI, BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN EGYPT IS PREPARED TO GIVE THEM A VOICE IN REGULATING MATTERS IN SINAI. HE RECALLED THE LONG DISCUSSIONS AT SALZBURG AND ALEXANDRIA ABOUT UNEF RENEWAL AND THE
UNSC'S ACTION IN IGNORING THE ISRAELI LETTER OF LAST JULY CALLING FOR A SIX-MONTH EXTENSION OF UNEF. AT SALZBURG WE HAD REQUESTED SADAT TO AGREE TO ANNUAL RENEWAL OF UNEF FOR THREE YEARS AND, SHOULD THIS BE VETOED BY THE SOVIETS OR CHINESE, TO UTILIZE THE "UNITING FOR PEACE" RESOLUTION TO BYPASS A VETO. FURTHER, IF THIS DID NOT WORK, E HAD ASKED SADAT TO APPEAL DIRECTLY TO COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TROOPS TO UNEF TO KEEP THEM THERE. SADAT HAD AGREED TO DO SO. THESE CONCEPTS HAD BEEN INCORPORATED IN SADAT'S PERTINENT LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD, DATED SEPT 1. HE ALSO RECALLED THE ARGUMENT ABOUT THE LANGUAGE OF ARTICLE V OF THE AGREEMENT, WHERE WE HAD INITIALLY SUGGESTED THE "PARTIES" AGREE, BUT AT EGYPTIAN INSISTENCE HAD DROPPED THIS TO MORE GENERAL LANGUAGE.

5. THE ENTIRE CONTEXT OF THESE DISCUSSIONS, FAHMY ARGUED, UNDERScoreD THE FACT THAT EVEN THE US RECOGNIZES GOE ALONE CAN TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION TO KEEP UNEF THERE. ISRAEL HAS NO SAY IN REQUESTING UNEF RENEWAL, ONLY EGYPT HAS. HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO GIVE US NOW WHAT HE HAD EARLIER TURNED DOWN. SOMEWHAT SHARPLY, FAHMY STATED, WE MUST STOP PRESENTING ISRAELI POSITIONS.

6. I TOLD HIM FIRMLY THAT WE WERE NOT PRESENTING AN ISRAELI
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POSITION. AS A MATTER OF FACT, WE HAD NOT YET DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH THE ISRAELIS BECAUSE WE FIRST WANTED TO WORK OUT AN ACCEPTABLE SCENARIO WITH OUR EGYPTIAN FRIENDS. OUR PROPOSAL IS SOLELY OUR OWN AND WAS DEVISED IN THE LIGHT OF OUR BEST JUDGMENT OF WHAT IS FEASIBLE TAKING ALL FACTORS INTO ACCOUNT. I REITERATED IT LEAVES THE INITIAL INITIATIVE IN EGYPT'S HANDS AND THEREBY IN NO WAY DEROGATES FROM EGYPT'S CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY. WE MUST ALL RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS NO WAY OF STOPPING ISRAEL FROM INDICATING ITS ACQUIESCENCE TO UNEF RENEWAL. THE ISRAELIS, LIKE THE EGYPTIANS, ARE A PARTY TO THE AGREEMENT.

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7. FAHMY WOULD HAVE NONE OF IT. HE DENIED THAT BECAUSE THE ISRAELIS ARE A PARTY TO THE AGREEMENT, THIS NOW GIVES THEM A VOICE IN UNEF RENEWAL. MOREOVER, HE CONTENDED, THE FACT THAT THEY ARE AN OCCUPYING POWER IN SINAI ALSO DOES NOT GIVE THEM A VOICE IN UNEF RENEWAL. UNEF OPERATES IN THE BUFFER ZONE, NOT IN ISRAELI-OCCUPIED TERRITORY. WE SHOULD TELL THE ISRAELIS FIRMLY TO KEEP HANDS OFF OF UNEF RENEWAL. HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO ISRAELIS MAKING AN ORAL STATEMENT DURING DEBATE WELCOMING UNEF RENEWAL FOR A YEAR. HOWEVER, ISRAELI AGREEMENT OR ACQUIESCENCE TO SUCH RENEWAL SHOULD NOT APPEAR IN THE SYG'S REPORT OR IN THE FORM OF A LETTER TO THE SYG. IF THE ISRAELIS INTERFERE IN THIS MATTER AND TRY TO SCORE A POLITICAL GAIN BY CLAIMING THEY NOW HAVE A SAY IN UNEF RENEWAL, GOE WILL WITHDRAW ITS REQUEST. SO FAR AS GOE IS CONCERNED, THIS IS NOT SIMPLY A PROCEDURAL MATTER, BUT ONE WHICH AFFECTS EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER SINAI. FAHMY CHARGED USG SHOWS INADEQUATE CONCERN FOR THIS ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM AS EVIDENCED BY OUR CONTINUED FAILURE TO ANSWER HIS EARLIER QUERIES RE ASSURANCES THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL CEASE THEIR SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES IN SINAI AND STOP ATTEMPTING TO CREATE DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES THERE.

8. IF WE OBTAIN AN ISRAELI ASSURANCE THAT THEY WILL NOT INTERFERE, FAHMY SAID, HE IS READY TO PROCEED WITH THIS LETTER. THE MORE ISRAELIS INTERFERE IN THE MATTER, THE MORE THE SOVIETS AND OTHER CRITICS OF THE AGREEMENT WILL BE ABLE TO WORK AGAINST IT.

9. WE WENT ROUND AND ROUND ON THIS MATTER FOR ANOTHER 40

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MINUTES OR SO WITHOUT ANY CHANGE IN FAHMY'S POSITION. HE KEPT MAKING HIS POINTS AND I KEPT REPEATING THAT THE EGYPTIAN POSITION IS UNREASONABLE AND UNREALISTIC. NO ONE CAN STOP THE ISRAELIS FROM INDICATING THEIR AGREEMENT TO UNEF RENEWAL. FAHMY FINALLY SAID IF WE WILL NOT OR CANNOT STOP ISRAELIS FROM DOING SO, THE MATTER WILL HAVE TO TAKE ITS OWN COURSE. HE WOULD IN THAT CASE FIND SOME "COMPLETELY INNOVATIVE WAY" TO HANDLE THE MATTER. IF ISRAEL ASKS FOR UNEF RENEWAL, EGYPT WILL SAY NOTHING. IT WILL ALLOW THE MATTER TO GO TO THE UNSC FOR DEBATE. THE SOVIETS, AND PERHAPS OTHERS, MAY THEN BE EXPECTED TO ASK FOR THREE OR SIX MONTHS RENEWAL. ISRAEL AND USG CAN SEE WHAT THEY ABLE TO DO IN THE FACE OF EGYPTIAN SILENCE. FAHMY STRESSED THAT GOE WANTS UNEF RENEWED FOR A YEAR, BUT WILL IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES WAIT UNTIL THE RIGHT MOMENT TO INTERVENT IN A MANNER THAT CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES THAT IT IS EGYPT, NOT ISRAEL, WHOSE RECOMMENDATION IS THE DETERMINING ELEMENT.

10. FAHMY CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT HE WAS MAKING NO THREAT. HE WAS SIMPLY EXPRESSING STRONG GOE DETERMINATION NOT TO PROJECT IMAGE OF SHARING SOVEREIGNTY OVER SINAI WITH ISRAEL. THE RECENT DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT HAS ALREADY PLACED SADAT IN A BAD SIATUION BEFORE THE ARAB WORLD. SO LONG AS HE IS FONMIN, HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHEME THAT WILL BE VIEWED BY THE ARABS AS WEAKENING STILL MORE SADAT'S DAMAGED REPUTATION.

11. I EMPHASIZED TO FAHMY THAT OUR SCENARIO DOES NOT HURT SADAT'S POSITION. IT ENVISAGES AN EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE PRECISELY TO STRENGTHEN HIS POSITION. I DISPUTED HIS CONTENNTION THAT THE AGREEMENT HAS HURT SADAT AS MUCH AS FAHMY WAS CONTENDING. ON THE CONTRARY, IT WAS MY IMPRESSION THAT SADAT'S PRESTIGE AT HOME AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD HAD BEEN ENHANCED. FAHMY AGREED, BUT INSISTED THIS WAS NOT TRUE IN THE ARAB WORLD. HE WOULD NOT CHANGE HIS VIEW. HE HAD TO RPOTECT EGYPTIAN INTERESTS IN THE LIGHT OF HIS BEST JUDGMENT ON HOW TO DO SO AND COULD NOT ACCEPT OUR PROPOSAL AS ACHIEVING THIS PURPOSE. HE REITERATED THAT, IF WE CAN GET AN ISRAELI ASSURANCE NOT TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE SYG OR FORMALLY INDICATE AGREEMENT IN SYG REPORT, AND INSTEAD CONFINE THEMSELVES TO A STATEMENT WELCOMING UNEF RENEWAL, THEN ALL IS WELL AND GOOD. IF NOT, WE WOULD HAVE TO SEE HOW A DEBATE WOULD EVOLVE.

12. COMMENT: FAHMY HAS DUG IN HIS HEELS ON THIS ONE. HE PROFESSES
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TO VIO VIEW THE SUBJECT AS MORE THAN A PROCEDURAL MATTER, AND I AM AFRAID
HIS ATTITUDE IS PARTLY A REACTION TO OUR FAILURE TO TAKE UP STRONGLY WITH THE ISRAELIS THEIR SETTLEMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC ACTIVITIES IN THE SINAI. HE IS BEING STUBBORN AND SHORTSIGHTED, BUT IN THE ABSENCE OF NEW ELEMENT IN THE EQUATION IS NOT LIKELY TO BECOME

MORE FLEXIBLE. WECOULD GO TO SADAT, BUT THE
PRESIDENT KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT UN TECHNICALITIES AND IS IN ANY
CASE STILL UPSET ABOUT DISCLOSURE OF US COMMITMENTS TO ISRAEL.
THUS, SADAT IS LIKELY TO DEFER TO FAHMY'S VIEWS. THOUGHT OCCURS
TO ME THAT PERHAPS SYG, IF HE THINKS FAHMY'S IDEA IS UNVIALE
WAY TO PROCEED, MIGHT BE ASKED TO RAISE THE SUBJECT WITH OUR
FRIEND ISMAIL IN THE HOPE OF INDUCING A BIT MORE FLEXIBILITY
INTO THE EGYPTIAN POSITION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES, CAT-C
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975CAIRO10186
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P850081-1446
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751059/aaaacagn.tel
Line Count: 286
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 75 STATE 243022
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 APR 2003 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <29 DEC 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UNEF RENEWAL
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, EG, US, IS, UNEF, (FAHMY, ISMAIL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006